

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OEXC, UR, US

SUBJECT: US-USSR LITERATURE SEMINAR

REF: MOSCOW 10104

1. WE APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S DETAILED PRESENTATION ON THE PROPOSED US-USSR LITERATURE SEMINAR. AFTER REVIEWING REFTEL WE BELIEVE THAT VIEWS OF EMBASSY AND CU/EE DO NOT DIFFER IN SUBSTANCE.

2. WE AGREE WITH PURPOSE OF SEMINAR (PARA 2 REFTEL) BUT WOULD POINT OUT THAT PROSPECTS FOR INITIATING LONG-TERM CONTACTS BETWEEN WRITERS "WHICH DO NOT REQUIRE CONTINUED CU-EMBASSY SUPPORT" ARE NOT FAVORABLE. PRIVATE FUNDING FOR SUCH SEMINARS IS NOT EASY TO OBTAIN, AND SPONSORS OF SUBSEQUENT SEMINARS MAY LOOK TO THE DEPT FOR SOME SUPPORT. WE AGREE WITH EMBASSY COMMENTS ON GUIDELINES FOR THE SEMINAR (PARA 3 REFTEL). FROM THE VERY START WE HAVE PLANNED TO HOLD THE SEMINAR IN A "RETREAT-TYPE" FACILITY,
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WITHOUT SPECTATORS AND WITH PRESS COVERAGE ONLY IF DESIRED

BY THE SOVIETS. WHILE WE RECOGNIZE THE ADVANTAGES IN HAVING SOVIET AND AMERICAN LITERARY JOURNALS CO-SPONSOR THE SEMINAR, WE HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL IN PERSUADING THEODORE SOLOTAROFF TO PLAY AN ORGANIZATIONAL ROLE. HE DID EXPLORE WITH HIS AMERICAN REVIEW SUPERIORS THE POSSIBILITY OF THE REVIEW BEING US CO-SPONSOR, BUT AFTER LENGTHY CONSIDERATION, THEY DECLINED. IN ANY EVENT, THE AMERICAN REVIEW IS GENERALLY NOT CONSIDERED A MAJOR JOURNAL, AND SOLOTAROFF DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE THE ORGANIZATIONAL BACKSTOPPING REQUIRED FOR THE SEMINAR. WE ARE NOT AWARE OF ANY CONVERSATIONS HE MAY HAVE HAD WITH THE SOVIET EMBASSY HERE.

3. WE AGREE WITH EMBASSY THAT SEMINAR SHOULD BE UNOFFICIAL ON BOTH SIDES, AT LEAST TO THE EXTENT ANYTHING SOVIET CAN BE UNOFFICIAL. FOR OUR PART WE FORESEE STATE DEPARTMENT'S ROLE AS FACILITATIVE AND SUPPORTIVE. WE RECOGNIZE SOVIET DESIRE TO AVOID CO-SPONSORSHIP WITH WESTERN ORGANIZATION SUCH AS P.E.N. HOWEVER, ANY REPUTABLE AMERICAN ORGANIZATION OR JOURNAL CO-SPONSORING SEMINAR MAY FIND IT DIFFICULT TO BYPASS THIS MAJOR ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN WRITERS. WE CONCUR IN PROPOSAL THAT AMERICAN CO-SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS SEND LETTER TO N. T. FEDERENKO PROPOSING THE SEMINAR. (WE NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT FEDERENKO IS ALSO OFFICIAL OF THE WRITERS' UNION, AND THUS WEARS TWO HATS.) IF SOVIETS WERE ABLE TO FIELD A DELEGATION INCLUDING SOME OF THE WRITERS MENTIONED BY KUDRYAVTSEVA (PARA 6 REFTL), PROSPECTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL SEMINAR WOULD BE VERY FAVORABLE. HOWEVER, AS EMBASSY SUGGESTS, WE COULD NOT AGREE TO LIMIT US PARTICIPATION TO AMERICAN WRITERS WHOSE WORKS HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED IN THE SOVIET UNION.

4. WE HAVE DISCUSSED FOREGOING WITH FRED STARR, SECRETARY OF THE KENNAN INSTITUTE, AND SUGGESTED THAT WE CONSULT ON FINDING AN APPROPRIATE AMERICAN JOURNAL WHICH COULD CO-SPONSOR THE SEMINAR WITH THE KENNAN INSTITUTE. WE BELIEVE KENNAN INSTITUTE PARTICIPATION IS DESIRABLE BECAUSE IT HAS THE ORGANIZATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT OF THE WOODROW WILSON CENTER AND THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, AS WELL AS CONSIDERABLE EXPERIENCE IN DEALING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WITH THE SOVIETS. THE SOVIETS MAY NOT BE AS OPPOSED TO KENNAN CENTER CO-SPONSORSHIP (TOGETHER WITH AN AMERICAN JOURNAL) AS EMBASSY BELIEVES. THE CENTER HAS HOSTED SEVERAL RECENT SOVIET DELEGATIONS, AND SOVIET HISTORIAN ALEKSANDER FURSENKO HAS APPLIED FOR A VISA (MOSCOW 10484) TO ACCEPT A RESEARCH GRANT AT THE WOODROW WILSON CENTER THIS YEAR. ANOTHER ADVANTAGE OF THE KENNAN CENTER IS THAT THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE SEMINAR COULD POSSIBLY BE PUBLISHED,

IF SO DESIRED, IN THE "WILSON QUARTERLY", A SCHOLARLY PUBLICATION OF THE WOODROW WILSON CENTER. DEPT IS POUCHING BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE KENNAN INSTITUTE, INCLUDING REPORT ON THE RECENT VISIT OF FRED STARR TO THE SOVIET UNION WHERE HE MET MANY LEADING SOVIET SCHOLARS FOR DISCUSSION OF COOPERATION WITH THE KENNAN INSTITUTE AND SOVIET PARTICIPATION IN THE WILSON CENTER FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM.

5. AS FOR THE AMERICAN JOURNAL SELECTED, ITS PARTICIPATION WOULD HAVE TO BE MORE THAN "ONLY IN NAME", SINCE ANY REPUTABLE JOURNAL WOULD PROBABLY WISH TO PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN PLANNING AND CONDUCTING THE SEMINAR, INCLUDING PERHAPS THE SELECTION OF US PARTICIPANTS. WE AGREE THAT SENDING SIDE SHOULD DETERMINE ITS DELEGATION, BUT WE ALSO RECOGNIZE THE POSSIBILITIES FOR NEGOTIATING OUT ANY POSSIBLE DIFFERENCES.

6. WE WILL ADVISE REGARDING APPROACHES TO JOURNALS HERE.
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